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## **San Diego City Councilman Ben Hueso is Keynote Speaker at High School Graduation Ceremony**

San Diego City Councilman Ben Hueso (Council District 8) will be the keynote speaker at the Urban Corps of San Diego County's John Muir Charter School Commencement Exercises on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Students at the Urban Corps attend the on-site John Muir Charter School to study for their high school diploma while earning a small paycheck working as crew members on conservation and environmental projects in San Diego County.

Eighteen young men and women involved in this "earning while learning" program will receive their high school diploma in the first of two graduation ceremonies the Corps holds each year. All of these young people have passed the high school exit exam and met the necessary credit requirements for graduation. These young people were unmotivated and unsuccessful in traditional public high schools but at Urban Corps' on-site charter school their potential was unlocked. Through their hard work they have changed their label from "drop-out" to "GRADUATE".

"The Corps program addresses the needs of this special group of young people here in San Diego. This organization has reached out to this younger generation who in most circumstances would not have completed their high school education. Without a high school diploma or the necessary vocational skills many cannot find decent employment. Most of these students come from disadvantaged circumstances and have other family members to support. The San Diego Urban Corps has provided an exceptional opportunity not normally found elsewhere," said Hueso. "I've been a guest at a number of their high school graduation ceremonies and it's a pleasure to see the pride and sense of fulfillment in their faces as each achiever receives their diploma. Graduation is a life changing moment for all learners—for these young men and women it's even more so and I'm honored to be part of this very special day."

**What:** High School Graduation Ceremony

**Where:** Urban Corps of San Diego County  
3127 Jefferson Street

San Diego, CA 92103

**When:** Friday March 9, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

**Why:** “To see a 20-year-old mom who hasn't had many lucky breaks in life beam with pride upon receiving her high school diploma is a sight to behold.”

***Gitfon Chung, former Board President  
Urban Corps of San Diego County***

***What is the Urban Corps and how do we help San Diego County?***

*We are a locally-based nonprofit that provides education and paid service project opportunities to young people who have dropped out of high school and have no job or job training so they can learn new skills and obtain a high school diploma while contributing to the quality of life in the San Diego area. Their participation increases the connection these young people feel to their community, their environment, and their own future. When they care about all three, it benefits us all. Urban Corps is proud to have served more than 4,000 young people since 1989.*

***Mission Statement***

*The mission of the Urban Corps of San Diego is to provide job training and educational opportunities to young adults, in the fields of conservation, recycling, and community service which will assist youth in becoming more employable, while protecting San Diego's natural resources and instilling the importance of community involvement.*